Copy

New Ipswich Nov. 27. 1837.

PHELPS MSS.

Dea. Gulliver

Dear Sir

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Your note of the 24th was received but having then just returned to the city &c --- I could not well call upon you before leaving for this place. In regard to the subject of the note, I have the following things to say—

1. I can have nothing to do, at present, with the Spectator, on any terms, if it must take the responsibility of the proposed new organization— Nor 2. Can I take it with the view of conducting it on the plan upon which it has been conducted for the last three or four weeks. The views recently presented on the subject of "common ground" are perfectly silly. According to them the Mass. society is as "orthodox" as the American, & both as orthodox as John Calvin himself!

The views presented by "A" are also in some respects radically erroneous. His "simple testimony" is a non-entity. To testify against sin, & yet not testify against it as practised & where practised, whether in church or state, is shooting at moonlight & hitting nothing. Indeed if associations, as such, may not resolve against it as practised & where practised, whether in or out of the church, then they may not print against it in their publications, nor speak against it by their agents, but must at once resolve all their resolving, speaking, printing & even praying into one glorious, grand diloquent, never-ending, never-to-be-applied abstraction, while the hideous reality

, as it exists in practice, is left to curl down snugly into the lap of mother church, with no impious lip to question the propriety, or profanely to disturb the quiet of its sacred repose!

If I have any thing to do with the Spectator then it must be only on the following conditions viz —

1. That I have the entire editorial control.

2. That it maintain thorough abolition principles.

3. That it maintain the principles of pure & thorough Congregationalism.

4. That it do not take the responsibility, or become the organ of the proposed new organization. It must stand as an independent paper, entangled with no alliances, one way or the other, of this character.

5. That it give battle, as occasion may require, to whatever in Garrison, the new organization, or any one else, I regard as at war with the principles of thorough abolitionism, thorough Congregationalism, or the true interests of evangelical religion & the evangelical churches & ministry. And as things now go, I should probably find things to complain of, on all sides.

6. That I have a reasonable prospect of support from it. On this point I need not now enlarge, as the previous conditions may settle it in your mind, that I am not the man to have charge of it. If so, I have nothing further to say. If not, I will only add now, that I cannot take it on terms so favorable as those I suggested, some three weeks since. The subsequent course of the paper will lose it, in my opinion, more subscribers on the first of Jan. than you now imagine. Perhaps I shall find myself mistaken. If so, I shall be glad of it. I shall be in the city on Wednesday & shall be happy to receive any further communications (if you have any) which you may have to make me on the subject. Yours for the slave

A. A. Phelps